

Remarks in a Discussion With Foreign Students in Vienna

June 21, 2006

The President. It's always important to wait on your wife. [*Laughter*] Please sit down. Here's what we're going to do. I'm going to give a statement, then answer a couple of questions. Then we'll get the press out of here and have a dialog. Is that okay? Yes. Let them get set up.

This will take a little bit of time and then we'll—first of all, I want to thank our Ambassador for setting this up, and thank you all very much for joining Laura and me. We're the parents of 25-year-old twin daughters who have dreams and aspirations just like I'm sure you do. And one of the things that I hope we're able to accomplish today is, I want to learn about you and your dreams and aspirations, and I want you to ask me questions about our country and, you know, the decisionmaking process that I go through. I'll answer any question you have.

I just want to assure you of one thing, that I believe that freedom is universal. I don't think freedom is just a right for American citizens. I don't think it's just a right for people who practice religion one way. I think it is the right of everybody who lives everywhere. I believe that free societies end up yielding peace and hope. And that's the cornerstone of my foreign policy.

I've had to make some very difficult decisions, as you know, and I made the decisions based upon what I think is in the best interest of my country, the security of my country. But I also believe the decisions I have made will end up helping people realize the great blessings of liberty. I believe people ought to be able to worship freely or not worship at all, but you're equally a citizen of the world. I believe that poverty and hopelessness in the spirit can be changed. I believe the United States has got an obligation to help others.

And we're doing so. We've got a very robust foreign policy. One part of the foreign policy you hear about is, obviously, my determination to defend ourselves. But we're also actively working with people who are suffering from HIV/AIDS in Africa. I'm deeply concerned about the Sudan and the situation

in Darfur. I believe that it's very important for the United States to work with friends and allies to accomplish our objectives.

And so the purpose of my visit here to Vienna has been to work with my European Union counterparts to join in a common alliance for the good of mankind. And so, thank you for giving me a chance to come by and visit. I'll answer a couple of questions. If anybody has any thoughts or questions and wants to be the lead-off person, please step up and do so. Don't be shy. [*Laughter*] Any questions or thoughts?

Yes, sir. Please. State where you're from so everybody knows.

Kosovo

Q. Mr. President, Mrs. Bush, and Ambassador McCaw, I just wanted—first of all, I wanted to say that I'm really honored to have been given this opportunity to participate in this breathtaking occasion. I would like—first of all, I would like to give thanks to Ambassador McCaw for the very friendly invitation to the Embassy and for choosing me as a student of this country that has been chosen here, among so many countries in the world. And want to thank also President Bush, American Government, and the American people, especially, for giving a continuous contribution and help to a country that was having, and is having, a tough time. Therefore, I have reason to believe that tough times never last, that tough people do.

The President. Do you mind if I use that sometime? [*Laughter*]

Q. It's not original from me. So long live America and its people. And thank you. And the following question is concerning my country. So I would like to ask you, since the peaceful people of Kosovo has put its trust to America and since the people of Kosovo believe in American power and American democracy, what will the American contribution be for the independence of Kosovo? And furthermore, to what extent is America as a superpower—to what extent is it ready to take on burden and responsibility for solving the problem of Kosovo and to contribute in its progress and democracy, economy and education and freedom?

The President. Yes, thank you very much. Is it Niser? Niser is from Kosovo. And yours

is a country which is a part of the world which has got our attention. As you know, we've got U.S. troops stationed there with the intention of helping provide stability so that there can be a peaceful resolution to the issue between Serbia and Kosovo.

We believe that dialog between Serbia and those who aspire for an independent country in Kosovo need to be ongoing, in such a way that there is a resolution that meets the needs of the majority and, at the same time, enhances minority rights inside Kosovo. To this end, we're working with our European partners to try to just bring a sense of stability and a sense of calm so that a rational solution can be worked out and so that the people, the Kosovars can realize dreams.

The ultimate political solution is going to require a buy-in by both sides. And I think the proper role of the United States is to encourage this kind of dialog. The Prime Minister of Serbia will be coming to the United States shortly, and we will work with him to urge him to listen to the needs of the Kosovars, and at the same time, assure him that our policy is to guarantee minority rights.

Thank you for your question.

One of the things that—you asked what else we can do. One of the things that is very important for our country is to have exchanges with students such as yourself. I hope that some of you, as you consider your future, will come to the United States to study. And the reason why I say that is because I want you to get to see America the way it is, not the way, necessarily, sometimes it's portrayed through a robust and free media around the world. You'll find the people there to be very understanding, very respectful of traditions. After all, we are a country of immigrants. One of the interesting things about our country is that we've been able to accept people from around the world and, as a result of common values and—that people become Americans. And it is that capacity to help people assimilate into our society that I'd like for you to see firsthand. I think you'll find there to be a very open society, one that honors freedom for all.

Yes, ma'am. Where are you from?

Foreign Investment/Life at the White House

Q. Hello—I'm from Kosovo as well. And first of all, I can say it's an honor to meet you, the President, the First Lady, and the Ambassador McCaw. Mr. President, I want wholeheartedly thank you, your Government, and the people of the United States for working for a stable, free, and democratic Kosovo and the region.

I wanted to say one thing. The intervention of 1999 of the American troops along with NATO partners has enabled me to be a participant today at this roundtable. Otherwise, most of all, I would have had the tragic fate of my father, a prominent university professor and minister of agriculture, as well, who was murdered in the war.

I have two questions. For Mr. President, do you believe that an independent Kosovo will attract foreign investments, consequently improve the economy and enable Kosovo to slowly gain financial independence by supporting their infrastructure and slowly decreasing the need for international financial aid?

And the other question goes to Mrs. Bush. Can you please describe a family day at the White House? [*Laughter*]

The President. Let me start, please. No matter what government I talk about, in order to attract capital, there must be some basic considerations—first of all, rule of law. In order for there to be capital and investment in any society, people have to be assured that their investment will be treated fairly, and therefore, there has to be consistent and constant law. What you can't do is have contracts, for example, that are broken—summarily broken, without an adequate court system to protect that kind of investment.

Secondly, in order for people to feel comfortable investing there has to be a society which shuns corruption. Capital looks at a country and says, well, maybe my money will end up being stolen, or maybe I have to bribe my way in, or maybe I have to make concessions in order to get my capital to be properly invested, and therefore, it's important that any society that wants to attract capital must have strong anti-corruption measures.

Thirdly, capital needs a rate of return. In other words, if somebody invests in a society, they expect there to be a return on their investment. And that means rational tax policy and monetary policy by the host government. What I'm saying to you is, is that there are certain just basic standards that must be met in order to attract capital. On the other hand, you're absolutely right, the investment into a society far outweighs the grants and aid, for example. A society that's capable of handling investment in a proper way is a society which will grow and prosper and enable people to be able to realize dreams.

The word I like to use in America is "entrepreneurial spirit." And how do you enhance that entrepreneurial spirit? Well, you do it through good law, good practice, and anticorruption.

The First Lady. Okay, a day at—a typical day at the White House. Well, I'll give you a workday first. We get up about 5:30 a.m.—the President gets up and goes in and gets the coffee and brings it back to me in bed. [Laughter] Very nice of him.

The President. Record that, please. [Laughter]

The First Lady. Then, we have three animals that get up at the same time, and they have to go out—two dogs and a cat. The cat actually doesn't have to go out, but the two dogs do. So then we read the newspapers and drink coffee until we finally get up. We eat breakfast about 6:30 a.m. The President goes to work at the West Wing, which is right there—we live where we work. It's sort of like living above the shop—and goes to the West Wing to work at 7:00.

Usually, I don't go to work until later, around 9 o'clock, unless I'm traveling in the U.S. The President's offices are in the West Wing of the White House; my offices are in the East Wing. And my chief of staff happens to be here with me, right now, Anita McBride. I think there are about 18 people on my staff, and we—I have a lot of initiatives that we're working on.

We travel the country to work on issues that have to do with what we can do to help young people, especially boys, because right now boys in the United States are not going to college—not as many boys go to college. More boys drop out of school; more boys,

obviously, get in trouble and are arrested. So we have an initiative that we've been working on where I visit programs around the country that help young people.

Sometimes we meet with—at the same time that I'm meeting with people—I meet with Afghan teachers, for instance, that are being trained in the United States—and the President, of course, is meeting with world leaders over there in the West Wing; also going out and traveling. And then, usually about 5:30 or 6:00, we're back in the Residence of the White House.

We have dinner. A lot of times our girls come over to have dinner with us. One of them was just living with us, but she just has moved out. The other one lives in an apartment and is teaching school; she's a third-grade schoolteacher. So sometimes they'll come over and have dinner with us. Sometimes we'll watch a movie in the White House theater. But we do go to bed early. And so that's sort of the typical day.

The President. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:33 p.m. at the Austrian National Library. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Ambassador to Austria Susan Rasinski McCaw; and Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica of Serbia.

Statement on Senate Action on Fisheries Management Legislation June 21, 2006

I applaud the Senate for passing a stronger Magnuson-Stevens Act by unanimous consent. By emphasizing the important role of ecosystem-based approaches to fisheries management and strengthening penalties for overfishing and other violations, this legislation will be vital to ensuring that we remain good stewards of our marine environment. I congratulate Chairman Stevens and Co-chairman Inouye for their work on this important bipartisan bill that embraces my priorities of ending overfishing and rebuilding our Nation's fish stocks through more effective, market-based management methods.

Since my administration released the Ocean Action Plan in 2004, we have been making great strides in our efforts to make our oceans, coasts, and lakes cleaner,